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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [MOPS](#) [PINS](#) [IZ](#)  
SUBJECT: BABIL: LOTS OF WORK TO BE READY FOR PIC

Classified By: ePRT N. Babil Team Leader Howard Van Vranken for reasons  
1.4 (b) and (d).

This cable is a joint product of ePRT North Babil, REO Hillah, and Baghdad Pol.

11. (S) Summary. Babil Province is not ready for PIC transfer; CF/PRT and GOI officials agree that significant improvement will be needed to meet the established PIC transfer goal of November 2008. In separate meetings, Governor Salem Salih Mahdi Al-Muslimawi (July 29) and leading Iraqi Army (IA) and Iraqi Police (IP) commanders (July 30) reviewed with CF/PRT obstacles that Babil must overcome to attain PIC; most involved facilities, equipment and training needs for IA/IP in still-unstable North Babil. The Governor and the IA/IP had somewhat differing ideas on PIC transfer needs and priorities, and the two apparently have not been coordinating. While infrastructure and capacity-building needs were easily identified and agreed upon by the USG and its interlocutors, integration of Sons of Iraq (SOI) units into the security plan will be more difficult to address. CF/PRT officers will continue to meet monthly with Babil civilian and military authorities to address PIC criteria. End Summary.

The Governor Says  
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12. (S) In a July 29 meeting at REO Hillah including Colonel Smith (DCG-S), Colonel James (4/3BDE CDR), ePRT N. Babil TL Van Vranken, and LTC/REO Hillah DTL Yanaway, Governor Muslimawi conceded that "we still have a northern problem" in Babil Province. While enthused by improved IA and IP performance, and complimentary of MND/DCG efforts to provide training, he identified a series of needs focused mainly on providing security in the north. These include: 1) equipping and training the 4th Battalion/31st Brigade/8, based near the power plant in the majority-Shia northern city of Mussayib, and 2) establishing a Provincial Joint Coordination Center (PJCC) with capacity to facilitate reliable communication with IP stations and emergency services throughout the province. While emphasizing his desire to attain PIC, Muslimawi stressed that the ISF will continue to need CF support afterward -- particularly air support, intel, and training. (Note: Muslimawi was confused about the IA units in need of training and equipment. 3rdBN/31 BDE/8 IA DIV based in Jaballa requires additional training and equipment, while 4thBN/31 BDE/8 IA DIV is fully equipped and trained but will be moved to a new base near Hamiyah. End Note.)

13. (S) Muslimawi also expressed concern about integrating SOI units into the PIC security plan. While acknowledging the role of SOI groups in upgrading security in his province over the past year, he argued that al-Qaeda Iraq (AQI) has improved its recruitment techniques and has infiltrated SOI in North Babil. The governor, an ISCI member who has been quick to label violence in North Babil as AQI- or Sunni-orchestrated acts of terrorism, suggested a review of the process for recruiting SOI members. He also recommended a re-evaluation of all persons currently employed

under the program. Comment: The governor exaggerates both the effectiveness and prevalence of AQI infiltration of North Babil SOIs, which we assess to be free of active AQI members. End comment.

#### IA/IP PIC Priorities

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¶4. (S) On July 30 at FOB Kalsu, COL James and EPRT TL Van Vranken met with Provincial Director of Police (PDOP) MG Fadhil and IA 31st BDE Commander Abdul Amir, who is responsible for Babil Province. Abdul Amir's troops also have responsibility for southern Baghdad. Fadhil and Abdul Amir elaborated a much more specific set of PIC-related needs. CF/PRT and IA/IP agreed that the following needs to happen before PIC can be implemented in Babil:

- The PJCC needs to be fully staffed, equipped and operational;
- 4th BN, 31 BDE/8 needs to be relocated to a soon-to-be-completed base west of the Euphrates, near the northern town of Hamiyah;
- Four new IP stations (Khidr, Muellha, Al Haq, and Shomali-Khidria) need to be built, staffed and operational;
- 8th and 17th IA boundaries should be re-drawn to coincide with provincial boundaries;
- North and South Babil Emergency Response Units (ERU) should be based, trained and equipped;
- IA units in Jabella need to be staffed and equipped.
- Special Forces units from the 31 BDE/8 IA should complete planned training.

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¶5. (S) IA/IP also mentioned the need to transition SOI to productive employment, but this was not discussed in depth as part of the security plan. When Col. James mentioned the previous day's visit with the governor, both Fadhil and Abdul Amir laughed involuntarily and remarked about the governor's lack of expertise on security issues. It was apparent that little coordination had taken place between IA/IP and the governor on PIC or security issues, apart from contact with the governor's IA advisor, LTC Abu Huda. The governor's collegial relationship with Fadhil and Abdul Amir should, however, enable them to influence him as we work toward PIC.

#### Next Steps

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¶6. (S) To assess progress toward PIC, CF/PRT agreed to reinstate monthly PIC assessments with Babil Province leadership, including the governor, IA and IP. DCG-S will visit PJCC next week and will subsequently coordinate with Fadhil to support the proposed PJCC staffing strategy. EPRT and 4/3 BDE will also coordinate a North Babil tribal council meeting in early August; the meeting will include SOI leaders, ISF leaders, and the governor, and will address how to reduce potential AQI influence.

#### PIC and SOI

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¶7. (S) Comment: Despite weak coordination between the governor and the IA/IP, general agreement exists between CF and provincial leadership about the basic ISF needs that must be addressed for the province to attain PIC status. CF/PRT assesses that the ISF is fully capable of handling the residual extremist threat in North Babil, but will need CF support in the near term. The path toward attaining PIC on basic equipment, training and infrastructure issues is relatively straightforward. The SOI will be a much more difficult issue, however, given that there is no clear consensus within the ISF about whether and how to integrate SOI into the ISF, much less agreement between the ISF and the governor's office. Furthermore, many Babil contacts have expressed concern to CF/PRT/Poloff about

the governor's intent and competence on the issue, fearing that SOI groups will be disbanded, abandoned and investigated under PIC. More work will be needed to press the provincial leadership to develop a plan for SOI integration that prevents SOI members from feeling disenfranchised and engaging in disruptive behavior. End Comment.  
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